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Jonathan Katz

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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF STATE ARTS AGENCIES 1010 VERMONT AVENUE, N.W., SUITE 920, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005 (202) 347-6352
(202) 737-0526 FAX

July 25, 1994

Dear Senator,

The Senate will soon take up the FY95 Interior appropriations bill, proposing a 5 percent cut in funding for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, representing the state and special jurisdictional government arts agencies of the United States, urges your vote in support of the Jeffords amendment, which will eliminate the 5 percent cut in NEA, and oppose the Helms amendments which will damage federal arts support.

o Support the Jeffords amendment to eliminate the 5 percent cut. The decrease proposed in the Senate bill sets the NEA back ten years to an appropriation level below that of 1984. The constant singling out of the NEA for funding cuts cripples the constructive work of the National Endowment for the Arts to distribute federal arts spending broadly across the country.

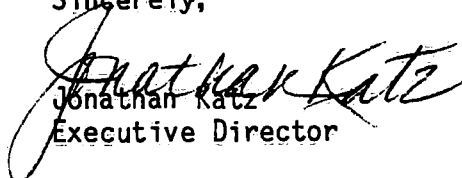
o Oppose the Helms amendment to cut NEA funds further. In making additional cuts, Congress would undermine the crucial measure of stability in federal funds provided by the NEA for arts activities and programs made available to Americans in every state in the country. Nor, should Congress ignore the catalyzing effect of NEA grants in attracting matching funds from the private sector and other sources, and fostering economic growth at the state and local level.

o Oppose the Helms amendment to impose further content restrictions. The NEA statute already provides for taking into consideration "general standards of decency" in judging grant applications. Furthermore the current NEA law clearly prohibits funding of obscene material.

o Oppose the Helms amendment to narrow grantmaking procedures. In the short time since her confirmation as NEA Chairman, Jane Alexander has instituted a number of reforms intended to increase accountability and strengthen the agency's grant awards processes. Additional procedural directives would hamper the effective implementation of these changes already underway.

The state arts agencies want a strong and effective partner at the federal level. We ask your support for the restoration of funds to the NEA, and we urge you to oppose efforts to undermine the important federal role in supporting the arts in the United States.

Sincerely,


Jonathan Katz
Executive Director